

Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Study

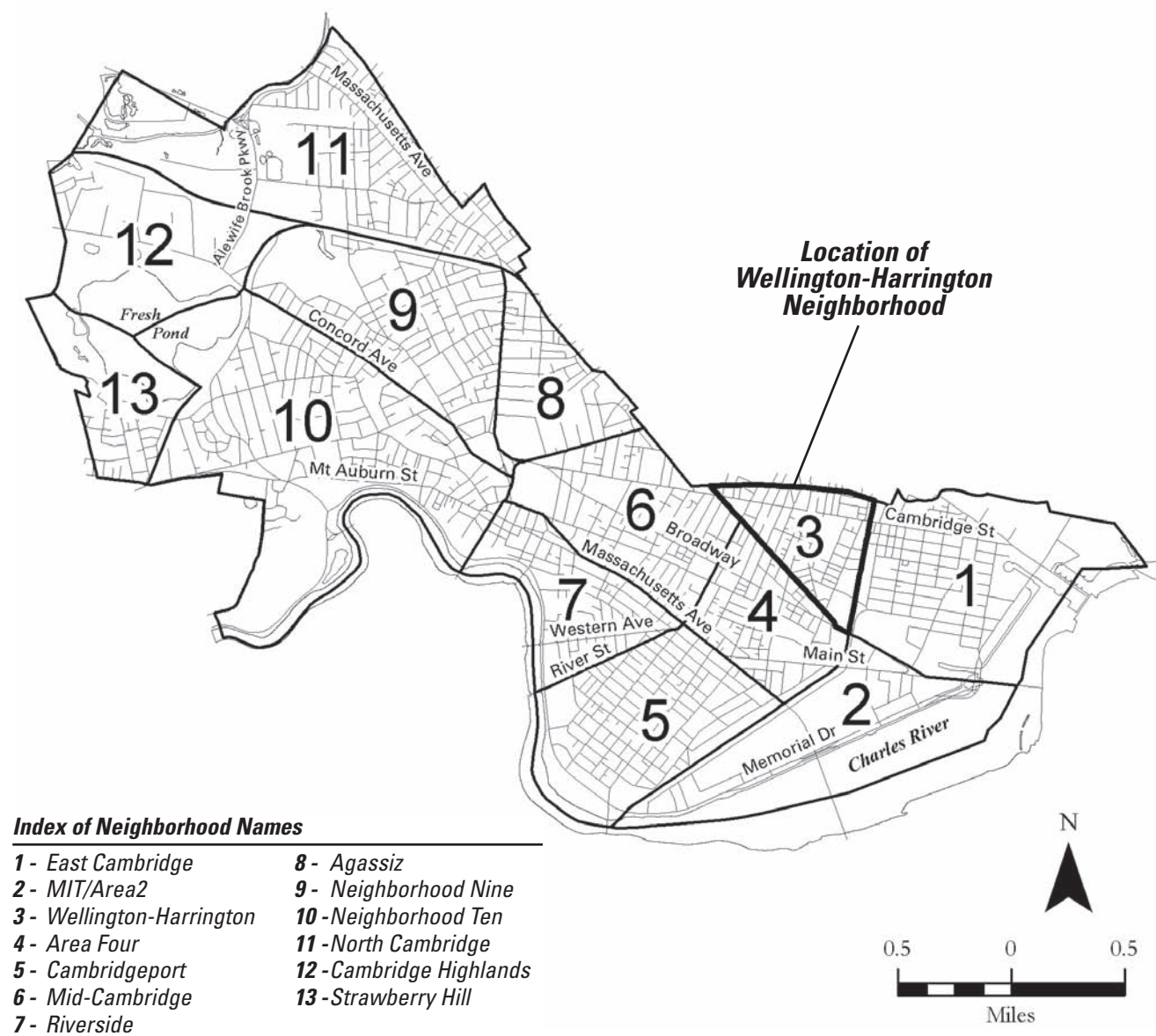
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Introduction



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Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Location Map

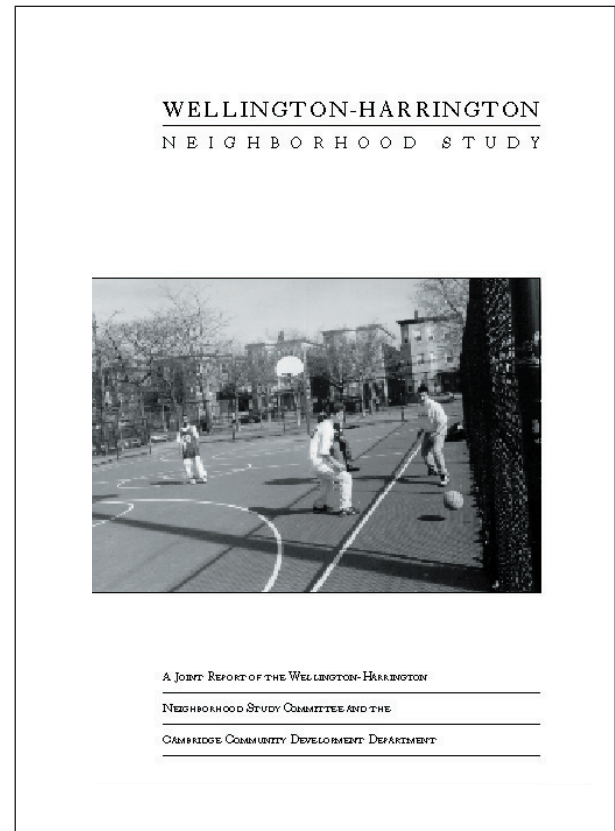


History

Since 1988, the Community Development Department (CDD), through its neighborhood planning program, has conducted comprehensive studies in ten of the city's neighborhoods. CDD staff work collaboratively with a citizen committee appointed by the City Manager to identify planning opportunities and make recommendations for a course of action. Recommendations address such issues as traffic and parking, housing affordability and homeownership, neighborhood commercial areas and employment, park maintenance, and rezoning for areas that are inappropriately zoned. As part of each neighborhood study, CDD collects data on demographic changes, as well as changes in housing markets, land use, and development potential in each neighborhood. Where appropriate, the recommendations resulting from the neighborhood studies are incorporated into the work programs of city departments for implementation. In some cases, this implementation takes place over a short period of time, in others it is part of long-term strategic planning. The neighborhood study process has also informed the city's growth policy document, *Towards a Sustainable Cambridge*, which outlines planning assumptions and policies in the areas of land use, transportation, housing, economic development, open space, and urban design.

Neighborhood Study Updates

To ensure that these studies remain current and useful, CDD has begun the practice of periodic study updates. Each neighborhood study will be updated approximately every three to four years. The update process involves a series of public meetings, where community members are invited to comment on



the original study recommendations, suggest new items, and prioritize issues. City staff from various departments attend these meetings to give presentations and answer questions as needed.

The end result of the update process is a "Summary, Recommendations, and Action Plan" document that is made available to the public, City Council, and City staff. The update process is intended to ensure that neighborhood studies remain current documents that evolve with the changing times.

The following are the goals and objectives underlying the neighborhood study and update process:

Goal

To enhance and inform the delivery of municipal services through collaborative planning between citizens, City Council, and city departments.

Objectives

- To create a planning process that has input from community members.
- To inform members of the community by making neighborhood study reports available to the public, in print and online.
- To provide information to department heads and other city staff about community needs and values.
- To assist with the budget and management process.

- To formulate long-term plans for neighborhood improvements.
- To conduct work on a neighborhood level that is reflective of larger citywide planning practices (such as the Growth Policy Document and the Report of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee).

Implementation

The goal of these neighborhood studies is to create a strong link between community process and the everyday work done by the city's many departments. It is important that these studies remain an integral part of the strategic management, budgeting, and daily operations of city departments. For this reason, CDD will increase outreach to other departments while developing studies and, once they are completed, will communicate recommendations to relevant departments to be incorporated into their work plans.

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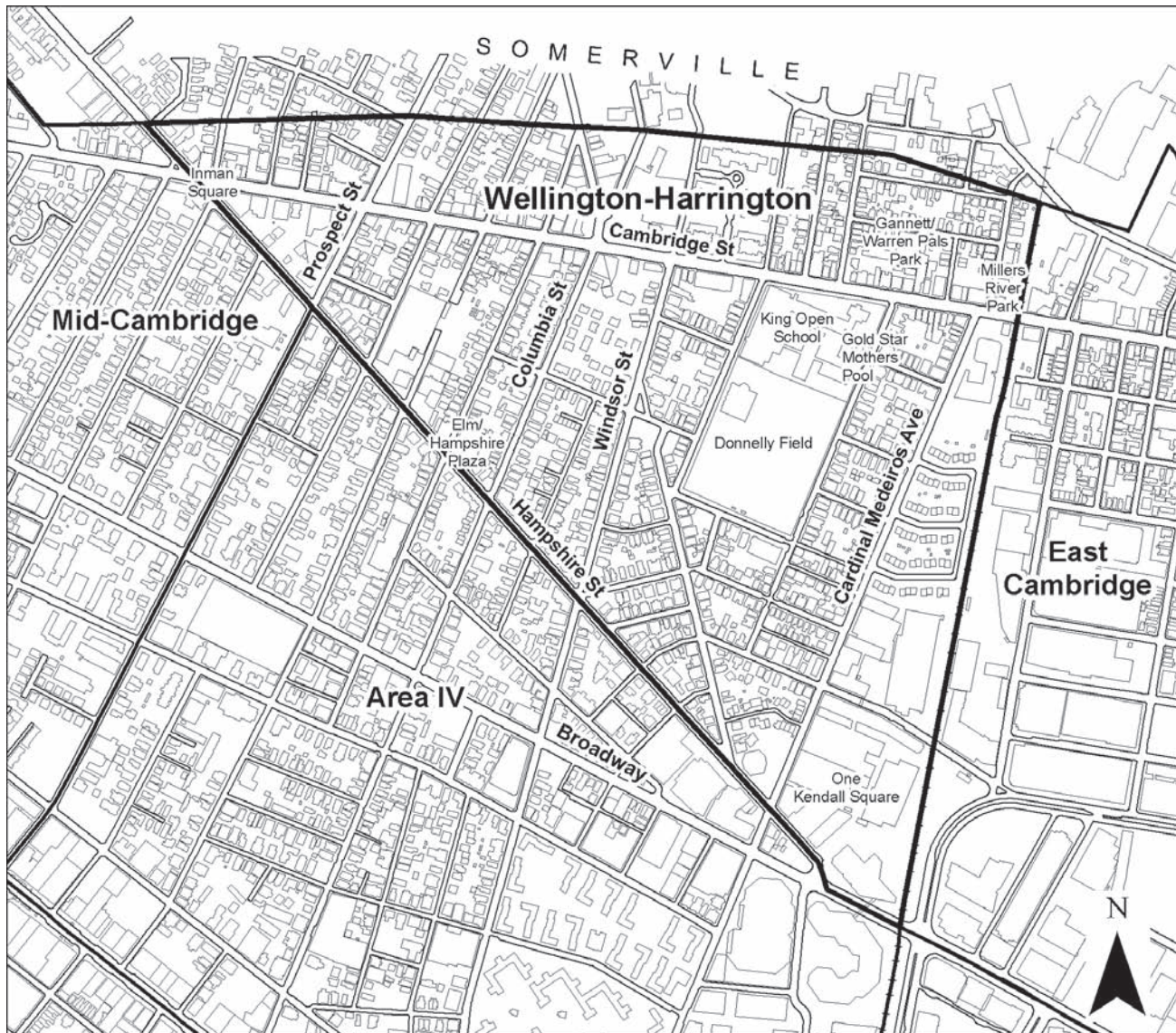
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Summary



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Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Boundaries



Original Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Study

The original Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Study Committee consisted of nine members of the Wellington-Harrington community, who met regularly between November 1992 and May 1993. During their meetings, this committee discussed a wide variety of issues affecting the neighborhood, heard presentations from Community Development Department staff, and received input from other members of the Wellington-Harrington community. The topics discussed by this study committee include land use, transportation, housing, economic development and employment, and open space. Their effort resulted in a document, the *Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Study* (published in 1996), containing an analysis of each of these topics along with recommendations to help guide long-term planning within the neighborhood. These recommendations are listed in the “Recommendations and Action Plan” table at the end of this document, with an implementation status and progress-to-date summary for each.

WELLINGTON-HARRINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY UPDATE

The Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Study Update process involved a series of three public meetings held in spring 2003, at which Community Development Department staff described some activities the City has undertaken since 1996 to address land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and open space issues in the neighborhood. Summaries are presented below.

At these meetings, members of the Wellington-Harrington community also discussed the recommendations of the original *Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Study* (1996) and made some new recommendations to supplement the original set. These new recommendations are included in the “Recommendations and Action Plan” table at the end of this document, with an implementation status and progress-to-date summary for each.

Land Use Update

Since the publication of the original study, the Cambridge City Council has enacted a number of changes to the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The two most significant sets of changes for Wellington-Harrington were the Citywide Rezoning in February 2001 and the Eastern Cambridge Rezoning in October 2001.

The **Citywide Rezoning** applied an integrated package of changes to the zoning ordinance. The purpose of these changes was to manage urban growth and enhance the livability of Cambridge, while preserving its urban diversity and economic health. The Citywide Rezoning Petition was developed between 1998 and 2001 through an extensive process involving the Citywide Growth Management Advisory Committee (a City Manager-appointed citizen group), the Cambridge Planning Board, the Cambridge City Council, and a series of public meetings. This petition, enacted by the City Council in 2001, included measures to promote the creation of more housing (including affordable housing) in all parts of the city, new limits on building heights and density in commercial districts, measures to discourage above-ground structured parking, and requirements for public review of large projects.

The **Eastern Cambridge Planning Study** (ECaPS) focused on the part of Cambridge east of Windsor Street and north of Main Street, which includes part of Wellington-Harrington. This study took place between 2000 and 2001 during an 18-month moratorium on development in the area. A study committee of neighborhood residents, representatives of area businesses and institutions, and City staff, working with professional urban planning consultants, explored concerns about the impacts of excessive development, developed a vision for the study area, and formed implementation strategies. ECaPS resulted in a package of zoning changes called the Eastern Cambridge Rezoning Petition, which was enacted by the Cambridge City Council in 2001. While the Eastern Cambridge Rezoning Petition did not include changes to the zoning in residential parts of Wellington-Harrington, it did include changes that will guide future development in former industrial areas nearby.

For more information, contact the Community Planning Division at 617-349-4651 or visit their website at:

www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/cp.

Transportation Update

Since the original study was published, a comprehensive **Traffic Calming Program** has been undertaken by the Environmental and Transportation Planning Division of the Community Development Department, working with the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department. Traffic calming projects involve physical changes to streets, such as raised crosswalks and curb extensions at intersections, which help to lower vehicular speeds and increase safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Traffic calming projects have already been implemented on Berkshire and York streets near the Harrington School and Donnelly Field, on Columbia Street, and at the intersection of Broadway and Market streets. The installation of traffic calming features is currently underway on Cardinal Me-deiros Avenue and on Willow Street next to Donnelly Field, both expected to be complete in early 2005.

The **Cambridge Street Corridor Improvements** project is the largest roadway/sidewalk project recently completed in the neighborhood. City staff worked with a committee of residents and business owners and held several public meetings to develop a comprehensive streetscape design for Cambridge Street. Construction of the project began in fall 2002 and was completed in fall 2004. Some highlights of the project are listed below.

- **Roadway and Sidewalk Improvements:** The road and sidewalk surfaces of Cambridge Street have been reconstructed between Lechmere Station and Inman Square. The roadway includes two 11-foot wide travel lanes, one eastbound and one westbound, with 7.5-foot wide parking lanes on each side of the street and a 5-foot buffer zone in between to minimize conflicts between moving vehicles and parked cars. Sidewalks are concrete with a 3-foot wide brick edging strip along the side closest to the curb. Street trees, lights, signage, parking meters, bicycle parking, and trash receptacles are located on the brick edging strip.

- **Curb Extensions:** Portions of the sidewalk have been widened at intersections and crosswalks. This makes it easier for pedestrians and drivers to see each other, shortens the distance pedestrians have to cross, and slows turning vehicles.
- **Lighting:** All of the existing street lights between Lechmere and Inman Square have been replaced with new lighting that includes attractive pedestrian and vehicular scale fixtures.
- **Street Trees:** Approximately 140 new street trees have been planted along Cambridge Street. The location and species of street trees have been carefully selected to minimize conflicts with utilities, parking, street lights, loading zones, and bus stops.
- **Signage:** All street signs on Cambridge Street have been replaced. The new street name signs are larger and easier to read than existing signs. The parking regulation signs are located in such a way as to minimize their number.
- **Municipal Parking Lots:** Signage, landscaping, and lighting improvements have been installed at the municipal parking lots on Springfield Street, Windsor Street, and Warren Street. These lots provide vital parking for the Cambridge Street business community.
- **Open Space:** Improvements have been made to Vellucci Community Plaza in Inman Square, the seating area by the Miller's River housing complex, and the side yard of the Valente Library. These areas are intended to serve as "pocket parks" for sitting and passive recreation. The Valente Library area also features three cat-shaped bronze benches designed by Cambridge artist Judy Kensley McKie.
- **On-Street Parking:** Maintaining an adequate inventory of on-street parking spaces has been a priority throughout the planning process. The total number of free, handicap, and metered parking spaces on Cambridge Street has increased by over 20 spaces.

Housing Update

The Community Development Department actively pursues opportunities to support affordable housing throughout Cambridge in a number of ways, including the development of new affordable rental and ownership units, the preservation of properties whose affordability restrictions are in danger of expiring, the use of zoning as a tool to increase the affordable housing stock, and counseling and

special mortgage products for potential low- to moderate-income homebuyers.

The **Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust** is one of the ways in which the City of Cambridge can fund the creation of new affordable housing units. Through the Incentive Zoning provision in the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, developers of certain large commercial projects are required

to contribute \$3.28 to this Trust for each square foot of commercial space developed. The City also contributes funding to the Trust. Using funds from the Trust and other sources, the Housing Division of the Community Development Department works with non-profit organizations such as Just-A-Start, Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI), and CASCAP to identify opportunities to create affordable housing through new construction or renovation. The City also uses funding from the Trust to preserve units with expiring affordability restrictions. Since the end of rent control in 1995, the City has helped to create or preserve more than 2,600 affordable units.

Additionally, the **Inclusionary Zoning** provision in the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance requires develop-

ers of any new or converted residential development with ten or more units to provide 15% of the total number of units as affordable housing. In return, developers are allowed a 30% increase in the maximum amount of floor space that can be developed.

The Housing Division also offers **First Time Homebuyer's Classes** that are free and open to all Cambridge residents, and allow some income-eligible households to apply for special mortgage products. For more information about this and other programs of the Housing Division, call the Housing Information Line at 617-349-4622 or visit their website at www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/hsg.

Economic Development and Employment Update

The Economic Development Division of the Community Development Department offers a variety of programs to assist small business owners. Some of these programs are open to business owners who meet certain income qualifications, and some are open to businesses within Cambridge's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, which includes a section of Wellington-Harrington. Others are open to all Cambridge businesses.

The **Facade Improvement / Signage and Lighting Program** has already been utilized by several neighborhood businesses. Available citywide since July 2002, this program provides technical and financial assistance to property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore their storefront facades. These improvements can help to build a stronger customer base for individual stores and to enhance the quality of entire business districts. The program provides a matching grant of up to \$35,000 for full facade improvements, which may include the restoration of architectural details, better windows and doors, new signage, and lighting.

Several neighborhood businesses have also participated in the **Best Retail Practices Program**. This program includes a free workshop and one-on-one

consultations for retailers and restaurant owners who want to improve the interior of their shops and restaurants. The City also offers some \$5,000 grants to cover up to 80% of the cost of interior improvements.

For more information about these programs, contact the Economic Development Division at 617-349-4637 or visit their website at www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/ed.

The Economic Development Division also provides support to make certain career development programs available to low-income residents, particularly within Cambridge's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, which includes parts of Wellington-Harrington. Two such programs are **Just-A-Start's Biomedical Careers Program**, a two-year program to prepare residents for entry-level biotechnology jobs, and the **Cambridge Health Alliance's Health Care Career Advancement Program**, which provides courses and career coaching to Cambridge Health Alliance employees, preparing them for higher level health care jobs and degree programs. For information about these respective programs, contact Just-A-Start at 617-242-0562 or the Cambridge Health Alliance at 781-306-8762.

Open Space Update

The original *Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Study* (1996) recommended that the City acquire additional land for open space within the neighborhood. This recommendation was supported by the later work of the **Green Ribbon Open Space Committee** (1999-2000), which set priorities for open space creation throughout the city using a variety of criteria, including the existing supply of open space, population density, income distribution, density

of children, current programmed park use, and projected recreation needs. While the area closest to Donnelly Field was found to have sufficient open space, the parts of Wellington-Harrington closer to Inman Square were found to be in need of almost all types of open space, including "tot lot" playgrounds, neighborhood parks, and larger community parks. In addition, the Grand Junction Railroad, which borders the neighborhood to the east, was

identified as a first priority for conversion to a park trail. Over the long term, the City's goal is to create open space within these priority areas. However, acquiring land for additional open space in Wellington-Harrington is challenging, due to the current land use patterns—predominantly small, residential lots—and the high cost of real estate. In the short term, the City seeks to maximize the utility of existing open spaces, by renovating existing parks and by creating smaller “pocket parks” in areas such as park edges and other small urban open spaces.

Park Renovations have occurred at two parks in Wellington-Harrington since 1996. At Donnelly Field, the playground was fully renovated in 1997, and renovations to the playing fields and basketball courts were completed in summer 2004. The upgrades to the fields and courts included: improved lighting; better turf and drainage in the outfield; new bleachers, seating, and picnic areas; better baseball, softball, and basketball amenities;

improved plantings, pathways, and entrances; and seasonal portable toilets. Gannett/Warren Pals Park also received an upgrade to its water play equipment in 2003.

Pocket Parks have been developed as part of the Cambridge Street Corridor Improvements project (described in the “Transportation Update” section on page 18), where a few areas along the sidewalk have been improved to serve as attractive urban plazas and seating areas. Improvements have been completed at Vellucci Community Plaza in Inman Square, the yard outside of the Valente Library, and near the Miller's River housing complex.

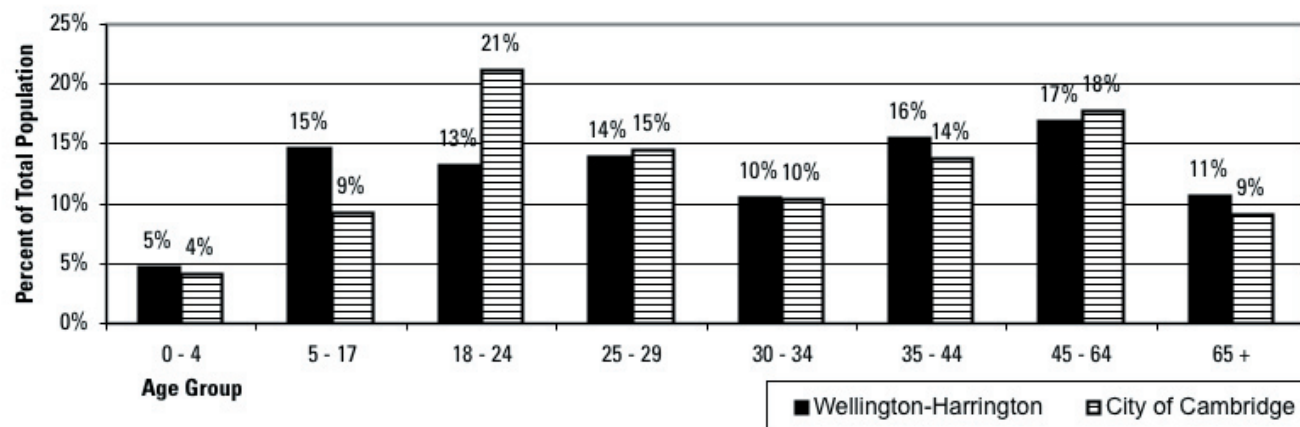
For further information about the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee or parks in general, contact the Community Planning division at 617-349-4651 or visit their website at www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/cp/parks.

Demographics Update

The 1990s were a period of population growth and change for the City of Cambridge. The overall population of Cambridge grew 6% between 1990 and 2000, from 95,802 to 101,355. Along with this overall growth, there have been substantial changes in the composition of the city with regard to age, ethnicity, income, and household and family types. The Wellington-Harrington neighborhood

likewise experienced an increase in population of about 3%, from 7,105 to 7,345, and has also experienced many changes in its composition. In some respects the neighborhood's changes reflect the same changes that have occurred across the city at large, while in other ways the neighborhood has retained its unique characteristics.

Age Distribution (2000 US Census)



Age

During the 1990s, the number of children in both Cambridge and Wellington-Harrington declined. In Wellington-Harrington, the number of children age 4 and under decreased by about one quarter, while in Cambridge that number decreased by about one eighth. Wellington-Harrington also experienced a

small decline in the number of school-age children (5 to 17 years old) while Cambridge experienced a slight increase. Wellington-Harrington still has a larger proportion of children than the city at large, with 19% of the Wellington-Harrington population under 18, as opposed to 13% citywide.

Wellington-Harrington has a smaller proportion of residents in the 18-to-24 age range than Cambridge at large, with 13% compared to the citywide figure of 21%. Still, the number of 18- to 24-year-olds in Wellington-Harrington increased by about 18% in the 1990s, compared to a 13% citywide increase. The number of 25- to 29-year-olds increased as well, by 25% in Wellington-Harrington and by 15% citywide. On the other hand, Wellington-Harrington experienced only a 3% growth in the

number of 45- to 64-year-olds, while in Cambridge at large this figure increased by 30%, more than any other age group.

The chart on the previous page compares the age distribution of Wellington-Harrington residents to the citywide age distribution for 2000. As noted, Wellington-Harrington has a larger percentage of school-age children and a smaller percentage of college-age adults than the city at large.

Race and Ethnic Diversity

Wellington-Harrington is one of the more culturally diverse neighborhoods in Cambridge. A large proportion of neighborhood residents are foreign born and speak a language other than English at home. About one-third of Wellington-Harrington residents come from a foreign country, compared to about one-fourth of residents citywide. Among foreign-born Wellington-Harrington residents, about 41% are of European origin, greater than the citywide figure of 25%.

Wellington-Harrington includes a large Portuguese-speaking population. About half of the residents of Wellington-Harrington over 5 years old speak a language other than English at home, and about 24% of the residents of Wellington-Harrington claim Portuguese, Brazilian, or Cape Verdean ancestry. In 1990, over 30% of Wellington-Harrington residents claimed a Portuguese-speaking heritage and spoke Portuguese at home.

Distribution of Races	Wellington-Harrington		City of Cambridge	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
<i>Total Population</i>	7,105	7,345	95,802	101,355
White	80%	65%	75%	68%
Black	13%	12%	14%	12%
Asian / Pacific Islander	3%	6%	8%	12%
Other	4%	17%	3%	8%

Households and Families

Wellington-Harrington and the city at large both experienced increases in the number of resident households in the 1990s. From 1990 to 2000, the number of resident households in Wellington-Harrington increased 10%, to 3,021, while the number of households in Cambridge increased 8% to 42,615. The percentage of households that are considered “families” decreased in Wellington-Harrington, from 63% in 1990 to 53% in 2000, and the citywide percentage decreased from 45% to 41%.

As shown in the table on the following page, during the 1990s the distribution of family types in Cambridge changed little, while Wellington-Harrington experienced some significant changes. In Wellington-Harrington, there was an 18% decrease in the number of married couple families along with a 26% decrease in the number of married couples with children, and conversely, a 23% increase in the number of families headed by unmarried females and a 36% increase in the number of single females with children.

Households and Families		Wellington-Harrington				City of Cambridge			
		1990		2000		1990		2000	
Total number of households		2,734		3,021		39,405		42,615	
Total number of family households		1,725		1,588		17,575		17,595	
Distribution of family types by head of household and children as a percent of total family households									
Married couple	with children	71%	33%	62%	26%	69%	28%	71%	28%
Unmarried female	with children	22%	12%	30%	18%	24%	13%	23%	13%
Unmarried male	with children	7%	2%	8%	2%	7%	2%	6%	2%
All families with children		47%		46%		43%		43%	

Note: A "Household" as defined in the U.S. Census is a group of people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. A "Family Household" as defined in the U.S. Census is a household containing at least two people related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Education and Income

The level of education among Wellington-Harrington residents remains lower than that of the city as a whole. According to 2000 Census statistics, 65% of Cambridge residents 25 or older earned a Bachelor or Graduate degree as their highest level of education. Only 34% of Wellington-Harrington residents have reached the same level of educational attainment, however, this represents a significant increase from 21% in 1990.

The median income of Wellington-Harrington residents also remains lower than the citywide median income. As shown in the table below, the median household income of Wellington-Harrington households in 1999 was 83% of the citywide median household income. For family households, the difference is greater, with the median family income in Wellington-Harrington at 68% of the citywide figure.

	Median Household Income		Median Family Income	
	1989	1999	1989	1999
City of Cambridge	\$44,422	\$47,979	\$53,604	\$59,423
Wellington-Harrington	\$40,523	\$39,899	\$43,719	\$40,675
Wellington-Harrington as Percent of Citywide	91%	83%	82%	68%